

**AVA**



**VETERINARIANS IN  
EDUCATION, RESEARCH  
AND ACADEMIA**

**2023**

## **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD**

Information and nomination instructions

**Closing date: COB Thursday 23 March 2023**

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# 1 Introduction

The Veterinarians in Education Research and Academia (VERA) Excellence in Teaching Award (EiTA) was first presented in 2015. It is the Australian Veterinary Association's premier teaching award. The award recognises veterinarians who extend the competencies of teaching aspects of animal and veterinary science.

One VERA Award for Excellence in Teaching will be offered in 2023. Undergraduate and postgraduate coursework teams and individual teachers may nominate. The award comprises a minimum of \$1000 cash award, a commemorative plaque **and the requirement to present the 'Excellence in Teaching Award' meritorious lecture at the AVA annual conference**. Free day conference registration and return economy airfares are provided to facilitate this requirement. The presentation will be available on the VERA web pages for all AVA members to access.

The VERA special interest group of the AVA is proud to present this annual award to recognise the efforts of AVA members who teach in aspects of veterinary education, animal care, animal nursing, veterinary technology, and teaching research.

## 2 Aim

This award is designed to **recognise quality teaching practice** and outstanding contributions to student learning in veterinary sciences, para-veterinary or animal sciences programs. It is intended that recipients, with the support of their institutions, will contribute to **systemic change** in learning and teaching through the **ongoing sharing and dissemination of knowledge**. Thus, this award aims to promote excellence in learning and teaching in higher education in veterinary and animal sciences.

This document provides information and application instructions for the Veterinarians in Education Research and Academia (VERA) Award for teaching of veterinary sciences.

## 3 Objective

To recognise teachers, including individuals and teams, who deliver proven excellence in teaching in veterinary sciences.

## 4 Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1 VERA

VERA's appointed working subcommittee for the VERA Excellence in Teaching Award is responsible for preparing the information and nomination instructions, the receipt and collation of all award nominations and selection of assessors and for providing secretariat support to the assessor panel.

### 4.2 Assessors

Peer assessors, selected by VERA executive, will assess all nominations against the information and selection criteria in these instructions.

## 5 Nomination eligibility

### 5.1 Eligibility

All nominations must relate to teaching activities in higher education, in veterinary sciences, para-veterinary or animal sciences programs.

Nominations are restricted to AVA members either individually or as part of a team who teach into veterinary, para-veterinary or animal sciences programs at any Australian tertiary institution or registered training provider. The main researcher is expected to be an AVA member.

Nomination is open to individuals and teams with teaching or teaching/research appointments (full-time or fractional, continuing or contract). Teams may be of any size.

To be eligible for consideration persons must make an application and comply with all mandatory requirements within the nominated time frames, including presentation and acceptance of the award at the AVA National Conference 2022.

### 5.2 Eligibility for previous recipients of Awards

Recipients of a Teaching Award (including Carrick Award, ALTC Award or an OLT Award) may only be eligible for nomination if they are part of a team nomination and they are not the lead nominee OR if the new nomination is for teaching that does not substantially replicate the original Teaching Award or Programme Award.

## 6 Assessment criteria

All nominees for the VERA Excellence in Teaching Award will be assessed on the evidence provided in their written statement against the four criteria below. All criteria will be given equal consideration. In assessing nominations against the four criteria, developed from the OLT teaching awards, the assessors will consider the following:

- extent to which the claims for excellence are supported by formal and informal evaluation
- extent of leadership, creativity, imagination, or innovation, irrespective of whether the approach involves traditional learning environments or technology-based developments
- information contained in student data or institutional student surveys, peer reviews, references, and selected teaching materials submitted by the nominee

Additionally, the assessors, in assessing against the four criteria, the assessors will evaluate the submission as to:

- the merit of the work to the veterinary profession
- extent to which the teaching approach includes (where appropriate) the application of the 3R's (replacement, reduction and refinement) of animal welfare on the nominee's teaching methodology
- the suitability of the 160-word presentation outline for presentation at the national conference

Nominees must include clear and consistent forms of evidence matched to the criteria.

The assessment criteria, which are developed from the Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) Awards for Teaching Excellence, are:

- 1 Approaches to teaching and the support of learning that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn.**  
This may include fostering student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning; participating in effective and empathetic guidance and advice for students; assisting students from equity and other demographic subgroups to participate and achieve success in their courses; encouraging student engagement through the enthusiasm shown for learning and teaching; inspiring and motivating students through effective communication, presentation and interpersonal skills; enabling others to enhance their approaches to learning and teaching; and developing and/or integrating assessment strategies to enhance student learning.
- 2 Development of curricula, resources or services that reflect a command of the field.**  
This may include developing and presenting coherent and imaginative resources for student learning; implementing research-led approaches to learning and teaching; demonstrating up-to-date knowledge of the field of study in the design of the curriculum and the creation of resources for learning; communicating clear objectives and expectations for student learning; providing support to those involved in the development of curricula and resources; and contributing professional expertise to enhance curriculum or resources.
- 3 Evaluation practices that bring about improvements in teaching and learning.**  
Evaluation comprises making judgements about the quality of programs and activities that are part of the academic, cultural, and social experience of higher education. This may include showing advanced skills in evaluation and reflective practice; using a variety of evaluation strategies to bring about change; adapting evaluation methods to different contexts and diverse student needs and learning styles; contributing professional expertise to the field of evaluation in order to improve program design and delivery; and the dissemination and embedding of good practice identified through evaluation.
- 4 Innovation, leadership or scholarship that has influenced and enhanced learning and teaching and/or the student experience.**  
This may include participating in and contributing to professional activities related to learning and teaching; innovations in service and support for students; coordination, management and leadership of courses and student learning; conducting and publishing research related to teaching; demonstrating leadership through activities that have broad influence on the profession; providing innovative learning and teaching for different contexts, including technology enhanced environments, for large and small class sizes and/or to meet the needs of a diverse student cohort; and influencing the overall academic, social and cultural experience of higher education.

## 7 Nomination guide

### 7.1 Nomination cover sheet

All nominations must be accompanied by the VERA Excellence in Teaching Award nomination cover sheet and declaration of acceptance of the award conditions which includes presentation at the 2023 AVA National Conference (Adelaide).

## 7.2 Written statement

The written statement describes the nominee's teaching activities and achievements and must address each of the **four** assessment criteria, providing evidence to support their claims.

The written statement must be presented in the following order:

- the synopsis (executive summary) must cover the nominee's teaching area or discipline, teaching experience, the particular focus of their teaching, teaching methods, and their research/teaching interests. The synopsis must be between 150–200 words and written in the third person. Should the nomination be successful, the synopsis will be used in communications regarding the recipient's success, for instance in the Australian Veterinary Association education day program presentation summaries for the National Conference 2023, on the VERA website and in archival information. This synopsis is not the same as the 160 word outline of the presentation, which is to be included on the nomination cover sheet.
- overview of the nominee's teaching and its context.
- statement addressing the assessment criteria and providing supporting evidence. Student survey data from institutional teaching quality survey or feedback should be framed and presented as a broader source of evidence to support excellence of teaching.
- lists of references should be included in the eight page written statement. Links in the written statement to references online will not be reviewed by assessors.

### Length of statement

The written statement is limited to eight A4 pages.

## 7.3 Two references

Two references of no more than one A4 page each, are to be provided by people able to comment on the nominee's contribution to student learning against the assessment criteria:

- one referee must be the Head of the nominee's faculty, department, school, or administrative unit
- if it is a team nomination, the references should apply to the team
- any pages more than the page limit will not be provided to the assessors
- references must be signed – electronic signatures are accepted.

## 7.4 Curriculum vitae

The curriculum vitae should outline the nominee's educational qualifications, employment history, teaching positions and teaching experience.

The curriculum vitae should be no longer than three A4 pages for individual nominations. Teams may allow one additional page per team member. This means a team of three may have five pages (three + two). Pages more than this limit will be removed.

## 7.5 Statement of contribution (for team nominations)

Team nominations must include an additional page which explains the role and indicates the percentage contribution of team members.

## 7.6 Applicant photograph

Nominations also must include a high quality (minimum 300dpi) photograph of the individual or team in JPEG format.

## 7.7 Formatting requirements

- documents must be A4 page size
- font must be 11-point Arial or 11 point Calibri (narrow fonts must not be used)
- margins must be at least 2 cm with clear definition between paragraphs, and no columns should be used.
- Adobe PDF format is required for all components of the submission except the photograph Submission

The 2023 nomination form, written statement, references, curriculum vitae(s), and statement of contribution (if team) must be in order and combined into one PDF.

# 8 NOMINATION PROCESS

## 8.1 Submission of nominations

**Award nominations** are required to be submitted via email to [Ursula.gleeson@ava.com.au](mailto:Ursula.gleeson@ava.com.au) by close of business (COB) **Thursday 23 March 2023**.

Award submissions must contain the following components in the following order.

Nomination components		
1	Nomination form	
2	Written statement (no more than eight pages, minimum 11pt font)	
3	Two references (single A4 page each)	
4	Curriculum Vitae (to a maximum four pages)	
5	Statement of contribution – team nominations only	
6	Applicant photograph (>300 dpi, jpeg)	

## 8.2 Selection process

Each award nomination is assessed against the assessment criteria by a minimum of three assessors selected by the VERA executive and two of which will be academics from the tertiary education sector. Award assessors may be drawn from other sectors of the AVA and/or tertiary education sector. The assessors make recommendations to the VERA Excellence in Teaching Awards working subcommittee which then makes recommendations to the chair of the VERA Excellence in Teaching Awards working subcommittee who will make the final decision of the award recipient. The Chair retains the discretion not to grant the Award.

## 8.3 Feedback

No feedback will be provided by the award assessors or the VERA Excellence in Teaching Award subcommittee.

## 8.4 Awards money

The Award monies are granted as a prize and disbursed to the recipient by cheque on VERA education day to be spent **within one year**.

**It is hoped that the money will be used to**

- advance the career of the award recipient
- provide additional resources to support the award recipient's teaching or activities related to the award
- assist the individual or team to disseminate and embed good practice in learning and teaching.

## 9 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### 9.1 Steps involved

The assessment of nominations involves a number of steps.

The first step involves VERA:

- considering whether a nomination complies with the requirements set out in this document
- assigning the nomination to at least two VERA assessors for review.

The second step involves the assessment of nominations by VERA assessors against the criteria set out in Section 5. Assessors email their evaluations and recommendations to the VERA EiT subcommittee email provided.

### 9.2 Selection of assessors

VERA maintains a register of assessors. Assessors on the register have received citations or awards; are OLT Fellows, Discipline Scholars, academics or team members; or are senior, retired academics.

In selecting assessors, VERA will consider discipline expertise, learning and teaching expertise, experience assessing applications or nominations and the potential professional development for the individuals and benefit to their institutions provided by their participation in the assessment exercise.

Strict conflict of interest provisions are enforced: no one may assess a nomination if they took part in its preparation; and, assessors do not assess nominations involving their own institution. All members of nomination teams are ineligible to participate in that round's assessments, and this principle is generally also applied to proposed members of reference groups. Assessors may be required to sign a conflict-of-interest declaration and a confidentiality agreement.

### 9.3 Notification of results of applications

Nominees will be advised of the results of their nominations by email.

### 9.4 Decisions

Decisions are final and subject to the acceptance of conditions for the presentation and promotion of the successful applicant (as detailed on the nomination cover sheet).

## 10 Privacy information

All applications will be considered confidential and any conflict of interest between assessors will be avoided (see above).

VERA must comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act) when handling all personal information provided for nomination purposes. For information about the AVA's privacy policy, including information on how personal information is handled, how to access or correct personal information, or how to make a complaint, please request a copy of the privacy policy from the AVA.

### **How we use personal information**

Personal information is collected to assess eligibility for the award. VERA may also use this information to:

- maintain an ongoing relationship with nominees
- award prizes
- invite nominees to relevant VERA events and programs
- review or evaluate the VERA Excellence in Teaching award.

### **Privacy Consent**

By nominating for an award or providing information in support of a nominee's application, you acknowledge and consent to VERA disclosing your personal information to the following persons and organisations:

- the nominee's institution
- persons assessing the nominations
- event and programme contractors performing services on behalf of VERA.

VERA or the AVA may also publish successful nominees' personal information (excluding telephone contact details) in media releases; presentations; conference programs; booklets about the VERA Excellence in Teaching recipients; VERA programs; and on the VERA or the AVA's website.

VERA or the AVA will not use or disclose personal information for any other purpose unless permitted by the [Privacy Act 1988](#).